2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

ment of Mr. Clarke, that his people intended to winter in their present encampment, and then proceed northwards; but did not seem at all disposed to welcome the addition of an Englishman to his party, urging the difficult nature of the road, length of time, chances of fights, &c., &c. However, I hoped that during the enforced delay opportunities would arise of improving our acquaintance, and obtaining his consent. I was much struck with the grave and dignified bearing of the old chief. Standing fully six feet, and with a well-proportioned muscular frame, no one would have guessed him to have passed his sixtieth year; and whether vaulting on a bare-backed steed, or leading the chase, he displayed an agility and endurance equal to that of any of the younger men: his thick black hair was slightly streaked with grey; and the bright intelligent eyes, aquiline nose, and thin firm lips were very unlike the popular idea of Patagonian features; a retreating forehead rather marred the expression of his face, which was, however, grave and thoughtful, and at times strikingly intellectual. Months passed in his company gave me afterwards ample opportunity of studying his powers of reflection, which were great, and often found expression in pithy and amusing sayings. Although particularly neat in his dress, and cleanly in his habits, he was troubled, like all the Indians, with vermin; and one night he roused me up to have a smoke, and after sitting for some time, apparently lost in deep thought, he remarked, 'Musters, lice never sleep!' He would sometimes, but rarely, indulge in intoxication, but never quarrelled, and it was an understood thing that either he or his brother Tankelow should on occasions of a general drinking bout remain sober to protect their families. He was himself childless, and had adopted a little terrier named Ako, which enjoyed the place and honours of an only child; but he displayed great affection towards his nephews and nieces, some one or other of whom might often be seen in his arms on a march, or after the return from the chase. During our first acquaintance I was most pleased

2: Musters T-5 (1869-1870)1873
SH5 Tehuelche SH5

The children are indulged in every way, ride the best horses, and are not corrected for any misbehaviour, I was always astonished that the youths and young men did not grow up more headstrong and wilful, as a result of want of training. People who have no children of their own sometimes adopt a little dog, on which they lavish their affections, and bestow horses and other valuables, which are destroyed in case of the owner's death.

It has always been a matter of surprise to me that the missionaries should have been so unsuccessful in their efforts to teach these children of nature to read and write, for they are naturally very intelligent (though of course there are exceptions). As a proof of their quickness in imitations, with very little trouble I taught Hinchel's son to write his father's name and those of two other Indians in a very short time. I also used to draw ships on a board with a piece of charcoal for the children's amusement, and they readily copied them. Hinchel himself, wishing to explain a part of the course of the Rio Negro, drew out a rough chart on the board, showing the bends of the river, which I afterwards found to be perfectly correct.

Whilst in their native wilds, I observed little immorality amongst the Indians; in the settlements, however, when debased by intoxication, they are, no doubt, depraved and loose in their ideas. But it must be recorded that, on the entry of the Indians into the settlements of the Rio Negro, at a subsequent period, most of the young women and girls were left with the toldos in Valchita, outside the Travesia, to be out of the way of temptations. There are many Tehuelche youths now growing up who have the greatest abhorrence of liquor; and I hope that in time this abstinence will spread further among them, for they possess no intoxicants of their own, and the rum is an import from the Christians, the ill effects of which they are well able to discern.

One word of advice to the future traveller may conclude this imperfect sketch. Never show distrust of the Indians;